

Message Text

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41

ACTION SS-25

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P 161155Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4097
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NOUAKCHOTT 1435

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR SS MR SP MO AG

SUBJECT: SAHARA WATCH: DESIRABILITY OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN
DECOLONIZATION OF SPANISH SAHARA

REF: MADRID 4839

1. SUMMARY: SEEN FROM OPTIC OF NOUAKCHOTT, PROPOSED DIRECT INVOLVEMENT OF U.S. IN SEARCH FOR RESOLUTION OF SPANISH SAHARA PROBLEM RAISES SERIOUS QUESTIONS. INTERVENTION BY U.S. AT THIS STAGE WOULD NOT APPEAR TO BE USEFUL IN TERMS OF SEARCH FOR DECOLONIZATION SOLUTION NOR DESIRABLE FROM POINT OF VIEW OF U.S. INTERESTS. GIVEN SERIES OF POLITICAL AND LEGAL ACTIVITIES NOW UNDERWAY, IT WOULD APPEAR PREFERABLE FOR U.S. TO HOLD OFF ON ANY DIRECT INTERVENTION IN SAHARA DISPUTE, EXCEPT PERHAPS FOR SERIES OF BILATERAL APPROACHES URGING ALL THOSE INVOLVED TO "COOL IT," AND ALLOW BEHIND-CLOSED-DOORS MANEUVERING NOW UNDERWAY TO BEAR FRUIT. END SUMMRRY.

2. NUMBER OF KEY ELEMENTS OF SAHARA PROBLEM ARE ONLY DIMLY PERCEPTIBLE AT THIS STAGE. FACTS ARE NOT YET AVAILABLE ON SOME COMPLETED ACTIONS; OTHER RELEVANT ACTIVITIES ARE STILL UNDERWAY; STILL OTHERS ARE UPCOMING. WE DO NOT KNOW SCOPE OR TERMS OF REPORTED MOROCCAN-
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ALGERIAN "DEAL," OR INDEED IF DEAL WAS STRUCK. WHILE

SPANISH REPRESENTATIVES IN MADRID, ALGIERS, AND NOUAK-
CHOTT HAVE ASSERTED KING AND BOUMEDIENE HAVE NOT IN FACT
REACHED AGREEMENT, PUBLIC STATEMENTS IN MOROCCO AND
ALGERIA AND U.S. REPORTING SUGGESTS TO CONTRARY.
SAHARA PROCEEDINGS AT HAGUE COURT ARE STILL GOING ON,
AND HANDING DOWN OF ADVISORY OPINION IS NOT EVEN
PLANNED UNTIL EARLY FALL. MAURITANIAN-MOROCCAN EXPLANATORY
MISSIONS IN AFRICA, ARAB WORLD, AND LATIN AMERICA ARE AT
MID-POINT, AND WE DO NOT AS YET HAVE ANY FIRM INDICATION
OF THEIR OUTCOME. WE ARE SKEPTICAL OF GIRM FOREIGN
MINISTER OULD MOUKNASS' ASSERTION THAT AFRICAN CHIEFS
OF STATE HAVE EXPRESSED COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF MAURI-
TANIAN-MOROCCAN POSITION AND HAVE PLEDGED SUPPORT, BUT
WE HAVE NO FACTS BEYOND ISOLATED EXAMPLES OF TOGO DE-
CLARATION AND ZAIRE PRESENTATION TO INTERNATIONAL COURT.
LAST MAJOR AREAS OF UNCERTAINTY IS UPCOMING OAU MEETING.
ACCORDING MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR TO MAURITANIA MAHJOUHI,
WHO WAS WORKING-LEVEL CHAIRMAN OF RECENT OAU DECOLONI-
ZATION COMMITTEE MEETING IN RABAT, SAHARA IS ON OAU AGENDA
AS ONE OF SERIES DECOLONIZATION PROBLEMS. WHILE FOREIGN
MINISTERS AND CHIEFS OF STATE MAY NOT TAKE ANY FORMAL
ACTION ON SAHARA DISPUTE BEYOND URGING SPAIN TO GET OUT,
FUTURE OF SAHARA WILL INEVITABLY BE MAJOR TOPIC OF IN-
FORMAL COLLATERAL DISCUSSIONS AND CORRIDOR CONVERSATIONS.
IF OAU MEMBERS RUN TRUE TO FORM, MAURITANIANS AND
MOROCCANS WILL BE ON RECEIVING END OF SOME VERY XINBDK
TAVF ABOUT SELF-DETERMINATION AND OAU'S LONGSTANDING AND
VIGOROUS OPPOSITION TO IRREDENTIST SOLUTIONS TO AFRICAN
TERRITORIAL DISPUTES. IMPACT OF SUCH TALK ON MAURITANIA
AMYVMOGMCCO IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT, BUT IT SEEMS CERTAIN
THAT STRONG OAU MAJORITY AGAINST PARTITION WILL AT VERY
LEAST AFFECT MAURITANIAN-MOROCCAN TACTICS.

3. LOOKING BACK OVER SERIES OF PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND
PRIVATE COMMENTS BY GIRM OFFICIALS, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT
MAURITANIANS ARE POINTING FOR UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND HAVE DEVISED
THEIR POLITICAL TACTICS TO TAKE MAXIMUM
ADVANTAGE OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE ON DECOLONIZATION
OF SAHAR. DESPATCH OF THREE EXPLANATORY MISSIONS SUG-
GESTS THAT GIRM HAS CONCLUDED THAT CHANCES OF OBTAINING
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GENERAL APPROVAL OF MAURITANIAN-MOROCCAN PARTITION OF
SAHARA ARE SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER IN UNGA THAN IN AOU IN
VIEW OF (A) GREATER REPRESENTATION OF ARAB STATES, (B)
PARTICIPATION OF NON-AFRICAN THPRD WORLDRS WHO ARE LESS
WEDDED TO ACCEPTANCE OF COLONIAL FRONTIERS, AND (C) IN-
VOLVEMENT OF OTHER NATIONS WHOSE ONLY INTEREST IN SAHARA
DISPUTE IS IN INSURING NONVIOLENT RESOLUTION. NEVER-

THELSS, IT IS NOT CLEAR AT THIS POINT HOW GIRM SEES
UNGA CONSIDERATION OF SAHARA PROBLEM EVOLVING BEYOND
ACCEPTANCE OF ADVISORY OPINION RECORDING EXISTENCE
MAURITANIANA-MOROCCAN HEGEMONY PRIOR ARRIVAL SPANISH.
IT IS POSSIBLE THAT GIRM HAS BEEN TOO OCCUPIED WITH
OTHER ASPECTS OF PROBLEM TO HAVE ADDRESSED QUESTION OF
GA TACTICS IN ANY DETAIL AS YET.

4. SPANISH HAVE REPEATEDLY MADE THEIR INTENTION OF
RESORTING TO UN KNOWN TO US, TO SYG, AND TO INTERESTED
PUBLIC. AT THIS POINT, HOWEVER, WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT
MAURITANIAN, MOROCCAN, OR ALGERIAN RESPONSE WILL BE TO
SPANISH EFFORT TO SECURE UN SPONSORSHIP OF SAHARA CON-
FERENCE. TO EXTENT GIRM SEES SPANISH MOVE AS ATTEMPT
TO FORCE ISSUE, TO PREJUDGE RESULT, OR TO ESCAPE FROM
CONTINUING TO MEET RESPONSIBILITIES WHICH SPAIN BEARS
AS RESULT OF ITS YEARS OF PROFITTING FROM ITS POSITION
AS COLONIZER, GIRM CAN BE EXPECTED TO REACT VIGOROUSLY
AND NEGATIVELY, JUST AS IT DID TO SPAIN'S INITIAL AN-
NOUNCEMENT OF ITS INTENTION TO PULL OUT IN NEXT FEW
MONTHS (NOUAKCHOTT 1074). ON OTHER HAND, UN SPONSOR-
SHIP IN GOOD TIME OF CONFERENCE ON SAHARA MIGHT MEET
WITH DIFFERENT REACTION. PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH HAS
ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY THAT GIRM WILL NOT RPT NOT PARTICI-
PATE IN FOUR-POWER CONFERENCE BUT DECLARATION WAS

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ACTION SS-25

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P 161155Z JUL 75

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4098

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NOUAKCHOTT 1435

EXDIS

CLEARLY IN CONTEXT OF SPANISH SPONSORSHIP. FOREIGN MINISTER HAS STATED PUBLICLY THAT ONLY PRACTICAL APPROACH TO AHARA SOLUTION IS DIRECANEGOTIATIONS AMONG MAURITANIA, MOROCCO, AND SPAIN. BUT AT SAME TIME, MOUKNASS TOLD PRESS THAT DECOLONIZATION OF SAHARA MUST BE WORKED OUT IN CONTEXT OF UNITED NATIONS. IT IS THUS CONCEIVABLE THAT GIRM MIGHT RESPOND FAVORABLY TO CALL FROM SYG WALDHEIM FOR SAHARA CONFERENCE. BUT IT IS MORE LIKELY GIRM WILL REITERATE ITS BELIEF THAT THERE ARE ONLY TWO FORA FOR DISCUSSION OF SAHARA DECOLONIZATION PROBLEM: A CONFERENCE OF MAURITANIA, MOROCCO, AND SPAIN TO AGREE ON DETAILED LOGISTICS OF HANDOVER TO MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO OR A UNGA DEBATE ON PHILOSOPHY OF AND NECESSITY FOR DECOLONIZATION AND OF MORAL IMPERATIVE OF ALLOWING A SINGLE PEOPLE TO REUNITE AFTER FORCED COLONIAL SEPARATION, WITH DETAILS OF TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY TO BE LEFT TO THREE PARTIES CONCERNED. GIVEN FACT THAT GA DEBATE ON SAHARA IS ONLY THREE MONTHS AWAY, GRM WOULD PROBABLY SEE LITTLE UTILITY IN ATTEMPTS TO ORGANIZE SPECIAL CONFERENCE ON EVE OF GA, AND WOULD THEREFORE SIMPLY DECLINE TO RESPOND TO ANY CONFERENCE CALL. SHOULD X HALL FOR CONFERENCE INCLUDE PROPOSAL OR RECOMMENDATION FOR DIRECT UN ROLE IN DECOLONIZATION PROCESS, GIRM WOULD PROBABLY REITERATE ITS PREVIOUSLY-STATED OPPOSITION TO UN ON-SPOT INVOLVEMENT OR EVEN TOKEN UN PRESENCE. CONFIDENTIAL

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DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL MOUKNASS EVEN REJECTED WEST IRIAN PRECEDENT AS NOT APPLICABLE TO SAHARA. (WHILE MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR MAHJOUBI INSISBTUNGA MUST DELEGATE TOTAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ARRANGING LOGISTICS OF HANDOVER TO MOROCCO, MAURITANIA, AND SPAIN, HE INDICATED GOM MIGHT BE PERSUADED TO ACCEPT UN-APPOINTED PERSONALITY TO ASSIST THREE STATES TO WORK OUT DETAILED PROCEDURES IN PATTERN ESTABLISHED BY AMBASSADOR BUNKER WITH INDONESIA AND NETHERLANDS AND USED MORE RECENTLY IN DECOLONIZATION OF BAHREIN.)

5. FROM OPTIC OF NOUAKCHOTT, PROPOSED DIRECT INVOLVEMENT OF U.S. AT THIS STAGE IN SEARCH FOR RESOLUTION OF SAHARA PROBLEM APPEARS PREMATURE AT BEST. WHILE EVIDENCE WILL NEVER ALL BE IN, THE PROPORTION AVAILABLE WILL BE SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER IN EIGHT TO TEN WEEKS THAN AT PRESENT. BY THEN, WE MAY HAVE BETTER IDEA OF CONTENT OF MAURITANIAN-MOROCCAN PARTITION AGREEMENT AND OF MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN "DEAL," IF ANY. RESULTS OF MAURITANIAN-MOROCCAN EXPLANATORY MISSIONS SHOULD BECOME APPARENT FIRST AT OAU SUMMIT, AND THEN AS GOVERNMENTS BEGIN TO WRITE INSTRUCTIONS FOR THEIR GENERAL ASSEMBLY DELEGATIONS. MOREOVER, WHILE SPANISH REQUEST FOR U.S. SUPPORT OF FOUR-POWER CONFER-

ENCE CALL APPEARS TO BE LIMITED TO TACTICS, PROPOSAL IM-
PLIES A PARTICULAR SUBSTANTIVE STANCE WHICH RUNS COUNTER
TO MAURITANIAN AND MOROCCAN POSITIONS.

6. FROM VANTAGE POINT OF CAPITAL OF SMALLEST AND LEAST
POWERFUL PLAYER, IT WOULD APPEAR MUCH WISER FOR USG
TO LIMIT ANY DEVIATION FROM STATUS OF INTERESTED
OBSERVER TO PARTICIPATION WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF INTER-
NATIONAL COMMUNITY, LED PERHAPS BY UN SYG, IN GENERALIZED
CALL ON ALL PARTIES TO ESCHEW VIOLENCE IN SAHARA DISPUTE.
IF WALDHEIM WERE TO LEAD OFF WITH PUBLIC APPEAL, USG
COULD APPRSPRIATELYH FOLLOW UP WITH BILATERAL APPROACHES
(PRIVATE QED/E PUBLIC) TO MAURITANIA, MOROCCO, ALGERIA,
AND SPAIN URGING ALL CONCERNED TO "COOL IT." STRESSING
IMPERATIVE NEED TO MAINTAIN PEACE AND TRANQUILITY TO
PERMIT WORKABLE SOLUTION ACCEPTABLE TO ALL TO EVOLVE.HANDYSIDE

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